

VZCZCXR08518
OO RUEHDBU
DE RUEHEK #0385/01 0991222
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 091222Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9313
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2058
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0148
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0158
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0631
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0447
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0155
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0314
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2453
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1840
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000385

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/09/2017
TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR KG
SUBJECT: GKNB REPORTS CONCERNS ON RUSSIAN SUPPORT FOR KULOV

REF: A. BISHKEK 332
1B. BISHKEK 374

BISHKEK 00000385 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

.

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

11. (C) On April 6, Ambassador met with GKNB Chairman Murat Sutalinov, who said that the Russians are supporting Kulov in exchange for Kulov selling out Manas Air Force Base when he comes to power. He also provided detail on Kulov's alleged ties to organized crime. The Kyrgyz are clearly worried about alleged Russian support for Kulov, and there is ample reason for Sutalinov to share such information with us -- whether it is true or not. Sutalinov also said that the U.S. needed to help bring western values to Kyrgyzstan and that he would help solve the problems facing U.S. NGOs. Given the GKNB's role in harassing NGOs over the last year, it is hard to take these latter comments at face value, but it will quickly become apparent whether they are, in fact, sincere.

END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

KULOV: RUSSIAN SUPPORT IN EXCHANGE FOR SELLING OUT THE BASE

12. (C) Sutalinov said the Russians are supporting former Prime Minister and United Front leader Feliks Kulov. He said that Kulov is funded by a Russian school-friend, who lives in Moscow named Lev Cherep, who allegedly made his money via organized crime. He said that Kulov is constantly traveling to Moscow to shore up his support and has made a deal: Russian support in exchange for selling out the base. (COMMENT: While this could be circular reporting, the Base

Commander had also heard the allegation that Kulov is trading in the base for Russian support from sources at the airport.
END COMMENT)

¶3. (C) According to Sutalinov, the deal is already evident in an anti-American article in Delo Nomer and a pro-Kulov article in Beliy Parakhod. (COMMENT: It is rumored that Delo Nomer has ties to Sutalinov and Beliy Parakhod has ties to Kulov. END COMMENT.) Moreover, he said, that Kulov, himself, is connected to organized crime. (COMMENT: Recently, Aki-Press owner Marat Tazebekov, a good source, told us that Kulov's ties to Chechen criminals pre-dated his prison term and that he has maintained those connections. END COMMENT.)

¶4. (C) Sutalinov noted that when former Russian Senator Igor Izmestiyev was arrested in Kyrgyzstan last fall, Kulov applied great pressure to Sutalinov to release the Senator. He said Kulov was unsuccessful, and Izmestiyev is now facing charges in Moscow. Turning to former Acting Minister of Interior Suvaliev, Kulov's close friend and deputy, Sutalinov said Suvaliev had served time in jail and was released because the witness recanted. He noted Suvaliev's reputation for fighting crime was greatly exaggerated and rested on seizing a small amount of drugs from a Hakim's son, which then was widely publicized. Sutalinov closed by warning that if Kulov comes to power, organized crime would rule Kyrgyzstan.

¶5. (C) Ambassador asked about the rumors that Bakiyev's family was tied to organized crime. Sutalinov said that these rumors were "exaggerated." The link was former SNB Chairman Aitbayev, who had a direct link to the late organized crime leader Ryspek Akhmatbayev and had "managed to do a lot of harm to Kyrgyzstan before he was fired."

BISHKEK 00000385 002.4 OF 003

(COMMENT: Clearly, the topic of First Family ties to organized crime was too hot to handle. END COMMENT.)

PITCH FOR U.S. SUPPORT OF BAKIYEV

¶6. (C) Without being specific, Sutalinov said the U.S. should play a constructive role in the upcoming political stand-off. (COMMENT: Left unsaid, was that if Kulov comes to power, not only would crime rule, the base would be kicked out and clearly neither outcome would be in U.S. interests. END COMMENT.) While he said the government would act with restraint, he said he was most afraid of a provocation, which could send things spinning out of control. Ambassador shared the message that Kyrgyzstan needed to solve its political problems with restraint: peacefully, legally, constitutionally. Sutalinov said he would have no role; the MVD would be charged with keeping the peace. When Ambassador noted that Sutalinov had played a critical role on November 6 in keeping the two sets of demonstrators apart, he said that was because then-Acting Minister of Interior Suvaliev was "hiding in his office. He was already with the opposition, even then," Sutalinov said. He added that Suvaliev, more so than Kulov is very aggressive and will do anything to come to power. He, nevertheless, "promised" the Ambassador that there would be no provocations from the government side.

SUTALINOV'S FUTURE: TEACHING AND NGOs

¶7. (C) Sutalinov turned the conversation towards his own future. He said that he was "tired" and wanted to leave government in the fall and asked the Ambassador what she thought. Ambassador responded that Kyrgyzstan needs every patriot it has, but Sutalinov needed to do what was in his heart. Sutalinov said he'd like to teach and work in the non-governmental sector. He said U.S. assistance is vital in strengthening this sector, so that western values will prevail. "We don't need your money," he said, "we need your

know-how." Without irony, he said that when he went to the States and saw how free Americans are, he was reminded of how free the Kyrgyz had been in the Soviet era. They had that same freedom; Kyrgyzstan needs to be free, and the U.S. should help.

SUTALINOV WILL HELP WITH NGO ISSUES

18. (C) The Ambassador said that the U.S. was helping and told Sutalinov briefly about U.S. assistance programs and stated that if he questions or concerns, he should ask. She emphasized the open nature of the assistance programs.

Sutalinov assured the Ambassador that the problems American NGO's had experienced, particularly NDI, would be sorted out.

He had already promised Kyrgyz Ambassador to the U.S. Zamira Sadykova that he would help. Sutalinov concluded that the only pro-Western people in the Cabinet are himself and Foreign Minister Karabayev. He noted that newly named Prime Minister Atambayev had more political weight than Kulov (COMMENT: unlikely END COMMENT), but that Atambayev was a "tribalist." He had just come from a conversation with Atambayev, who told him that the two of them, "as northerners" had to save the President. He was openly contemptuous of this, stating that "they" all say one thing publicly and another privately.

SUTALINOV'S SON: HEADED TO FLORIDA

19. (C) Sutalinov regretted that a whole generation of

BISHKEK 00000385 003.2 OF 003

Kyrgyz leaders is leaving the country and said it was necessary to build the next generation and program them with American, democratic values. He said that he had been Akayev's last prosecutor general (for one day) and had fled to Kazakhstan when Akayev was overthrown. He had been quickly called back to take the Minister of Interior slot, because the country needs leaders, he said. Sutalinov stated that Sadykova was helping him get his son into a Florida Catholic school (NOTE: He said he did not the name or the exact location in Florida. END NOTE.), which would in turn, prepare his son for a leadership role in Kyrgyzstan. His son, who is 14, would do all right; he noted that he himself had been sent away at the age of 18 to study at the Karaganda Higher Police School in Kazakhstan, where the mosquitoes are as big as horses. He was concerned that his position as Intelligence Chief would harm his son's chances at receiving a visa.

YOVANOVITCH